

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, October 22, 1881, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. (Chapelton, Leeds.) (Oct. 22nd, 1881) My dear Mrs. Bell:

You should have heard from me are this, but Alec promised to write and I thought he would be more likely to do so if I did not. Vain hope!

We had a pleasant passage until near the end when the waves arose in a terrible storm, the like of which had not been known on shore for long. But the vessel, the best and fastest afloat, was very steady and there was little seasickness. We arrived off Liverpool early Tuesday morning and were compelled to wait two hours, bags in hand, while the tug took two lords alone to shore. This British respect must have been extremely grateful to their Lordships after two weeks experience of the rude manners of the democratic republic of the west. "Where they -aw-treat you as if-aw-you were a common -aw-man," heightened by the thought that they were keeping nearly two hundred other people, among them such honored names as those of Sir Samuel and Lady Baker, Charles Dudley Warner and two Italian Counts, waiting.

Alec thought to show his Americanism by writing a letter of protest to the Times thereby only proving his Britishism, for what more characteristic of an Englishman than an appeal to the Times.

Berta and Charlie came to meet us in the tug. Very sweet and pretty and very matronly looked my little sister. Charlie has lost the delicate beauty of last autumn, but looks stout and handsome and both seemed very happy and easy with each other. Papa carried Mamma off to No. 21 Halfmoon St. London, while the rest of us came home with Berta and Charlie. Their pretty little house is some distance out of and above the fog and smoke of

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Leeds, separated from the road by a little driveway and the high stone walls so distinctively English in their proclamation that an Englishman's house is his castle not to be peered in by strange eyes. The house is semidetached of the peculiar brown brick never seen out of England. One enters quite a large entrance hall and turning to the right has on the left the door of the parlor, on the right that of the dining room so that the parlor is at the back of the house. A queer arrangement, but an advantageous for the pretty bay windows look out on a gentleman's beautiful park out of which is sliced the tiny house lawn. The necessary furniture of the house, carpets and sofas and chairs are generally good and Berta has added such a quantity of fancy things, old Egyptian rugs, chairs, statuettes, odds and ends that go up to make a home, that she has made an extremely pretty and tasteful habitation. Your clock stands on the dining room mantelpiece and is a beauty. I think I must get one just like it. Berta has a great deal of extremely pretty silver, nearly as much as I. Her housekeeping seems to go easily and well, her servant is a neat, strong and handsome woman who does for less pay more than my Emma over did and better. She has a woman come to help while we are here and the work seems thoroughly done without Berta's having to do more than give her orders for market and dinner. Charlie goes in early and comes out late and irregularly 3 sometimes having to return after dinner or to go away altogether for a day or two, so poor Berta is left much alone and that is very hard for one used to a large and sociable family like ours, but this is her only trouble. She has to live carefully and count her pennies, but she does not mind that she has enough. Mr. Ker came the other day and seemed well and was very pleasant, but he did not stay very long. He and Lily want us to come and make them a visit and Alec may do so, but I doubt if I do. Alec is at present in Paris, he was I think the only American to receive the Diploma of Honor and he was very much pleased. Where he went I have not heard more. Tomorrow Grace and I, the children and their nurses start for London, stopping at York, Lincoln, Leicester and Peterborough. I wanted to go to Windermere but it is rather far out of our way and the weather raw and damp.

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Many thanks for your and Mary's letters which came since I began this. I am glad if the Miss Symonds got the dresses to suit themselves though I am rather disappointed that Mary and Louise did not like my selection, however I shall not see them wear them so I don't mind. You did not tell me about the price of Daisy's dresses. I want especially to know.

Charlie is reading aloud to Berta and Grace. Berta is most asleep with her head in his lap, and I feel very much inclined to follow her example in the first, not the latter particular, so I must close before it becomes too apparent in my writing.

Very much love to you and Mr. Bell, Mary and her sisters.

Always affectionately, Your daughter  
Our address always is Care Barings Bros., Mabel.  
London. Chapeltown, Leeds Oct. 22nd, 1881.